

Effect of Peer Connection on Attitude towards School and Academic Motivation in High School Students during the Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

This paper takes into consideration the Covid-19 pandemic situation and provides a brief outlook on the impact on high school students. It mainly investigates the association of peer connection with students' attitude towards school as well as their academic motivation. The study was conducted through quantitative method and a descriptive research design was implemented. Three following scales were used to obtain the data: *Flourishing Families Survey of Family Life*, *Peer Connection Subscale*, *Rao's School Attitude Inventory* and *The Academic Motivation Scale*. The results highlighted an overall positive and a significant relationship between the variables. The conclusion has strongly emphasized the importance of peer connection.

Keywords: *Peer Connection, School Attitude, Academic Motivation, Online Classes*

"Education is what remains after one has forgotten what one has learned in school."

- Albert Einstein

With the advent of the Covid-19, people have experienced an extreme shift in their everyday normal routine. Everything took a significant turn and many sectors were heavily impacted by the consequences. But there is one prominent change we have seen closely, and that is in our education system. UNESCO has stated that ever since the pandemic began, around 1.37 billion students in 138 countries worldwide have felt the impact of schools and universities shutting down. In India, the government decided to shut down schools, universities, and other institutions in March. Following that, students and teachers had to resort to distance learning with digital devices and newly-tried teaching methods, and it was no less than a humongous task, both for the students as well as the administration. The absence of a physical classroom environment and face-to-face interactions affected everyone differently. Sitting in front of laptop screens and using devices has worked out for some people and not for others. A majority of learning in a school environment happens through interaction and engagement. Since a student is

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surrounded by his peers for most part of the day, he is ought to be influenced by them in some manner. Goodenow (1993) found that a sense of classroom belonging is linked to motivation in early adolescence. This makes it possible for the distance learning to cause a shift in motivation levels felt by the students. Also, it results in a shift of their attitude towards the school or the classroom.

We have all been taken aback with the sudden shift from the classroom environment to the online classes system. And it might seem like an easy task to be in your home environment and study, but that's just from the looks of it.

There has been a lot of research that states the impact of social relationships on motivation and student academics. One such research by K. Wentzel (1998) titled 'Social Relationships and Motivation in Middle School' emphasizes the significance of how social interaction can impact motivation. The research mentions how socially supportive relationships improve motivation. Another research titled "Peer Group Influences on Students' Academic Motivation" by Thomas Kindermann describes how peers are an integral part of a students' motivation. Previously, the focus used to lie with teachers and parents when it came to motivation. But recently, some light has also been shed on peers and their influence, how they make school time enjoyable, tolerable, and affect academic performance, attitude towards school and academics and their motivation levels. With the pandemic conditions now being the new normal, students are used to studying through online lectures. But it has been noticed that lack of social and peer connect has contributed to decreasing motivation among students. Hence, it is vital to understand in what way peer connection is associated with a student's attitude towards school and their motivation.

During the school years, one of the most important elements in a student's life is his peers' support and connection with them. Peers get a student through his struggles and hardships through his school phase. Research shows that it is not grades or classroom behavior that shall accurately predict an adult's adjustment, but instead how well children get along with other children (Hartup, 1992a).

Having peers around you is very important because students are influenced through companionship. This gives them motivation and ignites a sense of achievement within them. Around their teenage years, almost 80%-90% of students tend to have at least more than one or two friends around them (Hartup and Stevens, 1999).

Moreover, students tend to spend the majority of their time with their peers. So taking into consideration the amount of time typical children or adolescents spend within the company of each other every day, the influence of friendships on social as well as academic performance can be quite significant. This makes the relationship between peers and attitude towards school a critical factor in the early and late years of cognitive development. Consequently, it is interesting how friendship and peers affect academic performance throughout all stages of development.

Whereas, when the pandemic loomed all over us, we all saw a turn in the education system. Online interactions, electronic devices, and lousy internet completely differed from how a class environment felt like and changed the learning scenario for students. There was barely any real-life engagement and more a game of muting and un-muting. It did not take long for

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this change to impact how students underwent a shift in their attitude towards school and felt differently in terms of academic motivation.

Through this research, we aim to figure out *what is the association of peer connection with students' attitude towards school and academic motivation in high school students during the pandemic?*

This study will investigate to what extent do students receive class peer support, does it associate with the type of attitude students currently hold towards school and if that correlates with students' academic motivation. The hypotheses we intend to test are as follows:

1. Students who have supportive class peers are more likely to hold a positive attitude towards school.
2. Less support received from class peers is associated with lower levels of academic motivation in students.
3. Peer support is associated with students' attitude towards school as well as their academic motivation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Martin & Marsh (2009) peer engagement provides an energetic resource for coping with the challenges of schoolwork and promoting students' motivational resilience. With the engagement dropping, it was evident that coping strayed from the path for most students and their motivation levels also dropped. Students tend to realize high-quality relationships and are naturally intrinsically motivated when engaged in such. Also, they can as easily identify relationships that are not working, which can erode class cohesion (Carrie J. Furrer, Ellen A. Skinner, Jennifer R. Pitzer, 2012). Doing and taking part in peer groups is a key stage of development and creation of adolescent identity (Santor, 2000). Many see their peers as role models. These models can be a source of *motivation* or lack thereof. It could be positive or negative. Whereas when it comes to peer group influence, the attitude your peers hold towards academics is also influential. Their positive attitude can result in you having similar feelings towards class, but if they find the classes dull and boring, it could form your negative attitude too (Skinner & Belmont, 1991). Expectations of your peers and teachers and the climate surrounding adolescents determine their willingness to learn and when these two are not motivating, it leads to poor academic performance (Mullins, 2005). Maintaining high motivation affects psychological and social functioning and facilitates academic performance and positive perception of the school (Gilman & Anderman, 2006).

It has been researched that student are more likely to stay in school when they connect well with their peers and friends. Their similar interests and aspirations keep them connected with one another (Tinto, 1975). This similarity among individuals is known as homophily and is seen in a variety of characters, especially academic characteristics. (Altermatt and Pomerantz, 2003; Kindermann, 2007; Prinstein and Dodge, 2008; Ryan, 2000). Additionally, studies have reported that if you have a good friend or companion who appreciates your academic achievements, serves as a positive factor to achieve motivation. They also tend to be engaged in and even excel at academic tasks more than those who have peer relationship problems (Rubin, Bukowski, & Parker, 2006; Wentzel, 2005).

In this regard, the selection of friendship serves as a purpose to achieve academic development through motivation. (Resnick, Ireland, & Borowsky, 2004).

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The relationship between academic motivation and academic achievement among students (Kourosh Amrai, Shahrzad Elahi Motlagh, et. al) -

This study aims to explore the correlation between academic motivation and academic achievement among Tehran University students. It focuses on the importance of academic motivation, especially in the field of education, and how it impacts academic achievement among students. The study also briefs about how experts have divided motivation into two halves- intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and then goes about finding the correlation between motivation and academic achievement. For the data collection, 252 Tehran University students (115 male and 137 female) were required to fill the academic motivation questionnaire and were selected through the use of multi-cluster sampling. They were then required to fill in the Inventory of School Motivation-ISM (Ali, McInerney, 2009). This scale consists of 43 five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strong disagreement) to 5 (strong agreement) and has eight general components. Criterion for academic achievement was a mark which students themselves reported. Data were analyzed through using SPSS16 by means of Pearson Correlation coefficient. Data analysis indicated positive and significant correlation between Academic Motivation and Academic Achievement. Furthermore, subscales of task, effort, competition, social concern within eight subscales had a significant relationship with academic achievement. Conclusion: Regarding the results, students' academic achievement requires coordination and interaction between different aspects of motivation. These findings were found to be consistent with the findings of other studies (Ali, McInerney, 2009; Ghafor Khayyat, 2004). In this study, there was a relationship between the components of motivation and academic achievement and this was, to some extent, consistent with the results of the researchers who highlighted the significant relationship between motivations for acquiring self-esteem, encouragement, ability, competitiveness, social affiliation, achieving future goals, interest in learning and satisfying others, with academic achievement in students (Askari, 2006; McInerney, Yeung, McInerney, 2001 & Ghafor Khayyat, 2004). Although in this study there was a weak relationship between the components of motivation and academic achievement which can be attributed to the precision of students in reporting their average mark, the reported average mark might be rounded and the decimal numbers might lack enough precision. Above all, concerning the high grade of interest in a task, it is safe to say that learners who believe that tasks are worthy and valuable are more concerned with cognitive activities and use more cognitive and monitoring strategies and have basically more academic achievement. Also, once learners inherently value learning, this will have a positive effect on self-discipline and self-efficacy.

Peer Influences on Academic Motivation: Exploring Multiple Methods of Assessing Youths' Most "Influential" Peer Relationships- K. Rulison (2011).

This paper presents three types of peer relationships and changes in engagement as well as academic self-concept as they gradually progress to higher grade levels. Achievement motivation is highlighted and the concept of academic self-concept. Ever since young adolescence, peer influence is quite evident. In fact, it can be seen long before that. The more time an individual spends with their peer can be noticed through their behavior. Also, 2 types of influences have been talked about. First is where the person grows to become more and more similar. The other is where a comparative parallel is drawn by the individual through interaction to increase their skill level and academic standing. In the study conducted, they expected the three peer relations to affect their academic self-concept and engagement. It was a longitudinal study carried out over the periods of 5 years over 3rd to 5th graders. Teachers and students completed group-administered surveys lasting 45

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minutes. Parents were asked to sign and return a form if they did not wish their student to participate in the survey. In the present study, they use longitudinal data to examine peer relationship patterns associated with changes in youths' academic self-concept and engagement within two school years. The most consistent evidence emerges in seventh grade and for peers' influence on academic effort. Academic motivation may be especially susceptible to influence after the transition to middle school. This study examines the developmental significance of three conceptually and methodologically distinct types of peer relationships. It demonstrates differential influence effects by each relationship type across age levels. The study demonstrates the need to gain a more complete and nuanced understanding of peer influence processes.

The Relationship between students' attitude towards school, values of education, achievement motivation and academic achievement in Gondar Secondary Schools (Asrat Dagnev) -

The study's objective was to measure the relationship between students' attitudes towards school, values of education, achievement motivation and academic achievement. Accordingly, the study adopted a correlation research design. To achieve the objectives of the study, using systematic sampling, 362 students were taken from grade 9 students of Fasiledes, Angerb, and Azezo secondary schools in North Gondar, Ethiopia. Based on the objectives of the research and previous findings related to the variables incorporated in the research; questionnaires for students were adopted. To achieve the objective of the study three types of questionnaire & average achievement scores (AAS) were used. The first questionnaire deals with students' attitude towards school, the second deals with values of education and the third deals with achievement motivation whereas; academic achievement scores were taken from the record offices of the sample secondary schools. Average academic achievements were obtained from the record offices of the sample secondary schools. SPSS software computer program was used to analyze the collected data. One sample t-test was conducted to look at students' attitude towards school, values of education and achievement motivation of secondary school students. Pearson product moment was employed to examine the relationships between independent variables and dependent variables. And multiple-regression analysis was employed to see the effects of predictor variables on the criterion variable. The results obtained from grade 9 students indicated that students have positive and significant attitudes towards school, values education and achievement motivation. There was a positive and significant relationship between students' attitude towards school, values of education, achievement motivation and academic achievement. Also, positive and significant relationships were found between independent variables and academic achievement. Finally, the independent variables were found to be significant predictors of the criterion variable. The results contradicted the study result conducted by Fraser and Butts (1982) that revealed there is no correlation between attitudes and achievement. On the basis of these results, it was suggested that principals, supervisors, teachers, parents and educational practitioners should give attention to students' attitude towards school, values of education and achievement motivation in secondary schools and during instruction besides the cognitive factors. Students unfavorable attitudes towards school, misperceptions towards values of education and low achievement motivation was advised to prudently be investigated through student self-report checklist or questionnaire and early appropriate interventions could be taken by arranging special programs such as persuasion, modeling and by rendering counseling services. Furthermore, they conveyed that an investigation should be carried out on how to apply in practice students' attitudes towards

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school, values of education and achievement motivation to enhance secondary school students' academic achievement.

Relationships between university students' achievement motivation, attitude and academic performance in Malaysia (Kamariah Abu Bakara, Rohani Ahmad Tarmizia, et al) –

The purpose of this study was to identify the relationships between the achievement motivation, attitude and student academic performance. In the study on predicting student success with the Learning and Study Strategies Inventory (LASSI) Hendricks (1997) discovered that motivation and attitude were the best predictors of student academic performance. In this study students' academic performance was measured by using grade point average. In another study, Lirias (2009) indicated that with a caring environment, students showed better achievement and the ones who were able to achieve were those who attained high achievement motivation. Mahyuddin, Elias and Noordin (2009) also found a significant but low positive correlation between students' achievement motivation and their academic achievement. The research design employed by the researchers was descriptive correlational. Data were collected by self-reported questionnaires on a sample using cluster sampling technique based on the different faculty of studies in the university. The respondents were 1484 students from a local university (1102 females and 382 males). They were following the education, science, humanities, and agriculture/technical/engineering programmes. The students were a mixed bunch. Descriptive statistics conveyed their mean and standard deviation on 4 variables such as academic performance, academic motivation, attitudes towards learning and peer influences. Results indicated a positive significant correlation between students' attitude towards learning and achievement motivation ($r = 0.53$, $p < .001$), and between students' attitude and academic achievement ($r = 0.16$, $p < .001$). However, a negative and low correlation ($r = -.038$, $p > .05$) was observed between students' achievement motivation (nAch) and their academic achievement. The implications of the findings were also discussed in the paper. Findings of this study indicated an overall significant effect on students' academic achievement, $F(5, 1176) = 40.442$, $p = 0.001$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.14$ with all the five constructs found to be significant predictors namely, students' achievement motivation, attitudes towards learning and peer influence in learning, ethnic group and gender. Thus, this implies that attitudes towards learning and personal factors play an important role in learning or any educational settings. These findings were supported by other research, such as that by Zimmerman, Bandura, and Martinez-Pons (1992) who found a direct effect of attitude on performance and also by Pajares and Miller (1994). Generally, achievement motivation was found strongly related to academic performance. Thus, importance was highlighted on the data that motivational variables appeared strongly related to high achievement for instance to high levels of intelligence quotient.

Influence of Friendship on Motivation and Academic Achievement- (Anna Dechant, 2011)-

This paper starts by talking about how the length, gender, age, grade level, conflicts, etc. can influence motivation and academic achievement in students. While friendship plays a very large and important role in the social and emotional development of children that lasts well into adulthood, academic achievement also has been shown to influence future outcomes. The paper also suggests how it is important to have friends in the child and adolescent age and can have far-reaching effects on a multitude of areas. They can, directly and indirectly, influence their decisions and how they behave. Also, it was found that popularity and the

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friendship of similar peers are related to student academic achievement (Estell, Farmer, Cairns, & Cairns, 2002). It is seen that popular status and acceptance are associated with successful academic performance and rejected status and lower levels of acceptance are associated with academic difficulties (Wentzel, 1991). For example, elementary-aged students who are popular with their classmates tend to do better in academics than those who are not well accepted (Austin & Draper, 1984), with those who are unpopular at a greater risk for dropping out of high school (Parker and Asher, 1987).

Promotion of academic success and positive as well as negative motivation also comes from peers. Age group is also another factor studied that fluctuates motivation among peers. Berndt, Laychak & Park (1990), in an effort to assess friends' influence on adolescent academic motivation, found that when pairs of friends were given dilemmas assessing achievement values that affect effort, involvement, and interest in academic tasks, and were allowed to discuss the dilemmas together, there was an increase in similarity of the friends' independently made decisions. Decisions reflecting high motivation showed a greater value for education and higher priority assigned to school related tasks, whereas decisions reflecting low motivation exemplified little interest in doing well in school and a negative response to challenges requiring additional work. In general, *perceived levels of support from peers have been linked to positive aspects of motivation for students in elementary and middle school*. Perceptions of peer social and emotional support have been connected with the motivational aspects of goal pursuit, intrinsic value, and self-concept (Wentzel, 1994) in addition to classroom participation (Deci, 1992), and indirectly to interest in school (Wentzel, 1998). Overall, in the research it has been found that peers along with motivation, cause an impact on the academic achievement of a student. A study was conducted on 97 students using scales of friendship, motivation and student's past academic achievement records. As per the hypothesis and results, age was considered significant increasing achievement in subjects such as math and art. Further, intrinsic motivation was found to differ among grade levels, with 8th graders having significantly lower levels of intrinsic motivation when examining the influence of friendship quality and grade on intrinsic motivation. The lower levels of intrinsic motivation among eighth graders in comparison to fifth graders may be attributed to the fact that at this age children are much more likely to be extrinsically motivated, or motivated by external rewards (Eccles et al., 1998). Overall, the results of this study indicated that friendship quality is significantly predictive of both overall motivation and intrinsic motivation.

Friendship Networks and Achievement Goals: An examination of selection and influence processes and variations by gender (Huiyoung Shin, Allison M. Ryan)-

The aim of this study is to examine with social network analysis whether friends are similar to one another in terms of achievement goals and the extent to which this is due to students selecting friends with similar achievement goals and/or to friends influencing each other over time. Friendship selection and influence on achievement goals, social interactions and the negotiation of friendships and groups are ongoing and dynamic processes in classrooms (Farmer et al. First, we discuss the role of gender in friendships and peer influence and then the implications for gender differences in friends' influence on performance-approach goals. Adolescents' friends within classrooms were measured by asking students to nominate their closest friends, further described to students as "the friends you hang around with and talk to the most". Models were specified to simultaneously estimate the relative contributions of selection and influence on early adolescents' achievement goal changes, controlling for various network structure effects. Effects Testing Gender as a Moderator

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Models were estimated to test the moderating role of gender in selection and influence processes of achievement goals. Overall, there was a tendency for performance-avoidance goals to decline across the year (indicated by the negative estimate for the linear shape of performance-approach goals, 0.24). The extent to which a student is oriented to mastery and performance goals matters for their cognitive, emotional and behavioural engagement in the classroom. Influence effects for performance-approach goals were stronger for boys compared to girls in the classroom. Such work is informative for researchers and educators in guiding peer relationships and supporting motivation and engagement for early adolescent students.

Students Peer Pressure and their Academic Performance in School- (Vangie M. Moldes et. al) -

Specifically, the academic achievements of students are conjectured to be correlational by the support given by the parents, the teachers and the peer of teenagers that affect their level of academic performance. Peer pressure faced by many teenagers of the society, professionals understood the concept of peer influence that could affect teenagers in a negative way which can be prevented by educating and preparing teenagers to face the negative aspects caused by peer pressure. Social support plays an important role for teenagers to lessen the effects of stressful situations and stressors through the support of the peers in the group. Knowing how the teenagers interact with their peers and how they interact with each other and how the presence of peer groups affect students academic achievement in school plays an important role for various categories and even the whole educational system. Interaction of students between its peers are likely to influence the students and can be crucial for the student to determine their choice and could affect student performance.

Impact of Peer Relations in the Academic Process among Adolescents: (Irma Leka (Peza)-

Studies on the impact of peer orientation and group rates in adolescents are a lens with which to examine the academic achievement. Research studies in the field of relationships among peers and academic achievements show that the effect of peer orientation in academic achievement is to be taken into account. There are two kinds of models, the positive and the negative: Positive models, refer to individuals who have achieved outstanding success and are widely expected to improve others to pursue excellence and similar negative patterns that refer to individuals who have experienced disaster and is widely expected to motivate people to take steps necessary to avoid similar unpleasant result. Also, we can say that it is the pressure of their peers which can lead teens to unhealthy and unsafe behaviours and in their academic achievements. Pressure coevals are associated with wrong decisions, rebellion and humour fluctuations, which will lead to a poor academic performance, because of the fact that adolescents are not cooperative in the process of learning outcomes and as a result their school results fall weakly. This may be evidence of lack of peer influence academic achievement, or a need to investigate other aspects of friendship beyond the similarity in academic success. Motivation and academic performance expectations of others and the climate surrounding adolescents determines their willingness to learn and when these two are not motivating it leads to poor academic performance. In this study it is emphasized simultaneously that the influence of peer academic performance is not always negative. Expectations of others and the climate surrounding adolescents determines their willingness to learn and when these two are not motivating it leads to poor academic performance. Maintaining high motivation affects

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psychological and social functioning and facilitates academic performance and positive perception of the school. When students feel that they are cared for and treated with respect by their teachers and peers, they are more likely to develop greater confidence and be more motivated in their academic abilities.

The Relationship between Academic Motivations and University Students' Attitudes towards Learning: (Adnan Tasgin, Goksel Coskun) -

The aim of this research is to examine the relationship between university students attitudes towards learning and their academic motivations. This is a relational survey model study and the population composed of university students studying at a state university. The sample is composed of the university students determined according to stratified sampling method among the related university students. The "Attitude Toward Learning Scale" and "Academic Motivation Scale" were used in the study, it was found that the students attitudes and motivations for learning differ in favor of the females, there was a moderately positive and meaningful relationship between attitude towards learning and academic motivation as well as in attitudes towards learning of students according to school type. In addition, it was concluded that there was a high and positive correlation between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and academic motivation, and that there was a low and negative correlation between motivation and academic motivation.

Attitude Towards School, Motivation, Emotions and Academic Achievement: (Angelica Moe et. al.)-

A major indicator of academic well-being is attitude towards school. Additionally emphasizing motivational and affective elements and their association with academic success is not yet well known. The objective of this study is to explore the relationship between attitude towards school including motivation and emotions associated with the learning settings and achievement. The general hypothesis is that the school attitude mediates the influence on academic performance of motivational and affective components. They implemented two approaches to test this hypothesis. First, they studied the structural relationship between school attitude, motivations, emotions and achievement. Second, they checked the effectiveness of motivation and motivation-based educational preparation. The results indicated that the attitude towards school has a mediating role in shaping the correlation between affective-motivational factors and academic performance, but also a direct effect of self-confidence on school performance was shown. In education, a training curriculum aimed at encouraging emotions and motivations has a positive effect on school attitudes and emotions. No major impact on the motivational aspects was found. The consequences of negative emotions can resolve challenges produced by positive emotions. To achieve psychological growth and enhanced well-being over time, greater positive emotions need to be produced and encouraged. In order to encourage the importance of affective reactions in school, the training program was planned. In response to an increasing interest in the role of emotions in school achievement, it was created. It can be used in a training program that encourages enthusiasm and emotions in a school setting to help change attitudes towards school. The study was published in the Cognitive and Developmental Psychology Journal. It seems to rely more on the emotions and motivations encountered than on objective outcomes or academic marks to feel good in school. Teachers should be invited to improve the positive influence of students by communicating excitement, impact, expectations of mastery and showing importance of what is studied or achieved. Excessive criticism should be avoided for disengagement or loss and for social comparison. There is evidence indicating that intrinsic motivation is diminished by feedback pressuring the

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external control locus. Teachers and parents themselves should be self-confident and have expectations of mastery.

Relationship between Peer Attitudes Towards School, Selected Peer Group Activities and Academic Achievement of Secondary School in Nairobi: (Mukolwe Asakhulu Newton, Andanje Mwisukha)-

The research was planned to examine the relationships between the attitudes of peer groups towards school, activities of a peer group (including sports and games); and academic achievement of Secondary school students in urban Nairobi. Eight public and eight secondary private Schools were chosen for the analysis. A sample of 240 randomly selected students consisting of four students. The peer impact questionnaire was completed by these schools (PEQ). Mock test marks for students have been used as an indicator of their academic performance. Pearson Correlation of Commodity Moment has been used to test the hypotheses linked to peer group attitudes towards school, $P < 0.05$ was used, selected Peer group meetings, and the academic success of students. Gender Theories and Students' Residential status at school was assessed using the Kruskal - Wallis (as factors of ill peer influence) Parametric test at $P < 0.05$. Among other findings, the results of studies showed a Important relation between the effect of peers on attitude towards school, peer group activities and academic achievement. Further analysis was suggested in relation to variables such as Age, socio-economic status, race, introversion and extroversion can lead to variations in students' peer group impact.

METHODOLOGY

Purpose of the study

The aim of this study is to investigate the association of peer connection with students' attitude towards school as well as their academic motivation.

Sample

In order to inspect, a total of 85 participants were selected through purposive and snowball sampling. The participants were students of 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th grade between the ages of 15 to 19. These high school students were from both public and private schools.

Study Design

The study used a quantitative approach to observe the effect of peer connection on attitude towards school and academic motivation. We have implemented a descriptive research design to conduct the study and data collection was done through Google Forms. Consent was taken from all the participants before the collection of information where the participants agreed that their participation is completely voluntary.

Instruments

In the study, three scales were used to collect data from the participants. The scales are as following- "*Flourishing Families Survey of Family Life, Peer Connection Subscale*", "*Rao's School Attitude Inventory*" and "*The Academic Motivation Scale*".

Data Collection

These data collection tools were presented as it is through Google Forms and sent out to people through social media. A total of 85 responses were acquired in 2 days. This information was used to conduct the following research.

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Flourishing Families Survey of Family Life, Peer Connection Subscale

This self-report measure has seven items to assess whether children have a supportive friend. Children are supposed to rate each item using the following response options: 0=Never; 1=Once a month; 2=Once a week; 3=A few times a week; and 4=Every day. It was informed that item 5 should be recoded such that higher scores indicate stronger connections with peers. It has been recommended applying a mean score cut-off of 2.2 and below, to identify children who lack supportive friends.

Rao's School Attitude Inventory

Rao's School Attitude Inventory, developed by Dr. D. Gopal Rao consists of 30 items. Each item included in the scale is named as; 'Always', 'Most often', 'Frequently', 'Sometimes' and 'Never' and rated with the help of a 5-point Likert-type grading scale. The responses of the subjects were assigned numerical values ranging from 1-5 depending upon the degree of favourable or unfavourable attitude expressed. Thus, the total weighted score, if high, indicates a favourable attitude and if low, an unfavourable attitude towards the school. The reliability coefficient for the School Attitude Inventory was found to be .81. Thus, it may be said that the Inventory is a reliable tool for measuring the attitude of secondary school students towards the school. The test has been proved to be valid as well.

The Academic Motivation Scale

It was developed by Vallerand et al. (1992, 1993) twenty-eight-item scale, and was used to examine why students go to school/college. The seven subscales consist of three intrinsic-motivation subscales, three extrinsic-motivation subscales, and one amotivation subscale. Evaluation of the AMS showed good internal consistency within the subscales (an average of Cronbach's A = 0.84 across the seven subscales). Evaluation of the AMS met validity criteria for measuring intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and amotivation in previous studies (Fairchild, Horst, Finney, & Barron, 2005). Other evidence for the construct validity of using AMS for measuring academic motivation is the correlation found in subscale of AMS and related motivational behaviors, such as a correlation between the amotivation subscale and concentration in class, $r(218) = -.33, p < .05$, and correlations ranging between the three intrinsic motivation subscales and positive emotions in class.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The findings aimed at looking at the association between the peer connect among class peers (independent variable) with attitude towards school and academic motivation (dependent variables). Through the data we collected, these findings were drawn.

We found a higher number of students (66%) to have supportive peers than those who have a low peer support. (34%). (As given in Chart 1.)

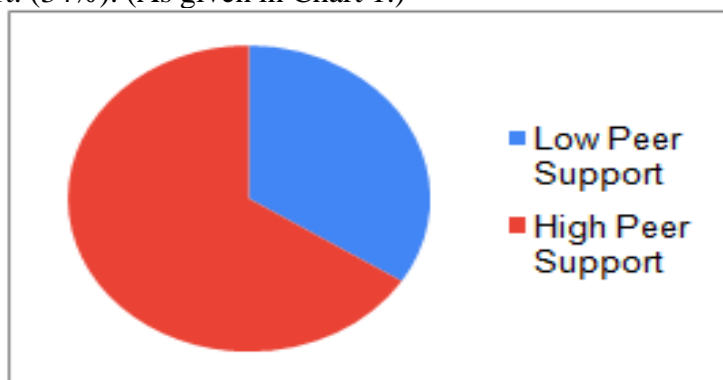
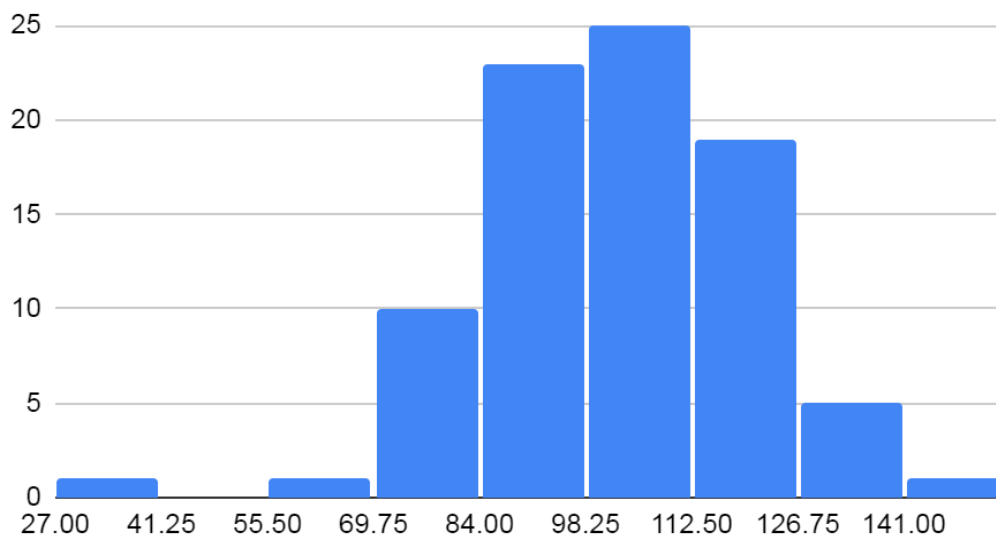


Chart 1. Comparison of low peer support and high peer support

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The attitude towards school analysed depicted that negative attitude towards school was portrayed by 1.14% of students, neutral level of attitude was portrayed by 58% of students and high levels of positive attitude was portrayed by 40% of students. (As given in Chart 2.)

Histogram of Attitude Towards School



Attitude Towards School range

Chart 2. Histogram of Attitude Towards School

The X-axis depicts Attitude Towards School and Y-axis depicts the Number of Peers.

The Academic Motivation values calculated after drawing the mean values were as such-

Table 1. Mean value of Intrinsic Motivation, Extrinsic Motivation and Amotivation

	Intrinsic Motivation	Extrinsic Motivation	Amotivation
Mean Value	55.96	47.77	18.29

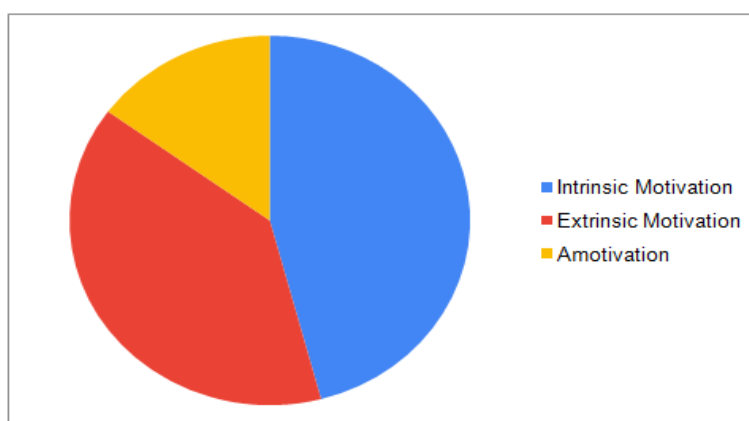


Chart 3. Comparison of Intrinsic Motivation, Extrinsic Motivation and Amotivation

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Hypothesis 1- Students who have supportive class peers are more likely to hold a positive attitude towards school.

To test our Hypothesis 1, we have used Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation to determine the strength of the relationship between supportive peers and positive attitude towards school. The coefficient that was derived is $r=0.426$, $p<0.01$. This indicates that there is a positive correlation between the two variables.

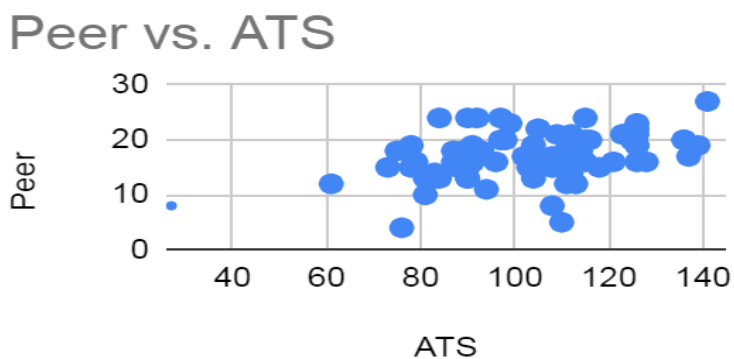


Chart 4. Peer Vs ATS

Hypothesis 2- Less support received from class peers is associated with lower levels of academic motivation in students.

To test this hypothesis, we calculated the mean score of students having low peer support and their levels of extrinsic academic motivation as well as mean score of students with high peer support and their levels of extrinsic academic motivation.

Table 2. Mean value of Low Peer Support, Ex. Academic Motivation, High Peer Support, Ex. Academic Motivation

	Low Peer Support	Ex. Academic Motivation	High Peer Support	Ex. Academic Motivation
Mean	12.68	43.24	19.27	47.67

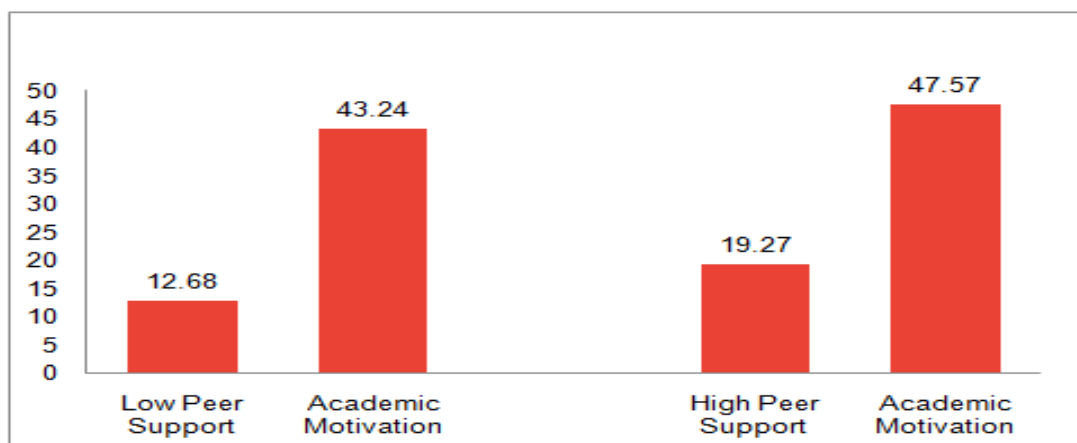


Chart 5. Comparison of Low Peer Support, Ex. Academic Motivation, High Peer Support, Ex. Academic Motivation

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This indicates that high peer support students had higher levels of academic motivation (47.57) than low peer support students who seem to show lower levels of academic motivation. (43.24).

Hypothesis 3- Peer support is associated with students' attitude towards school as well as their academic motivation.

To test this hypothesis, Pearson correlation matrix is used to draw associations between Peer Support, Attitude Towards School and the Academic Motivation values that include Intrinsic Motivation, Extrinsic Motivation and Amotivation.

In Table 3, the matrix indicated that there exists a positive and moderate correlation between peer support and attitude towards school ($r=0.426$, $p < .001$). Correlation between attitude towards school and intrinsic motivation ($r=0.188$) and amotivation ($r=0.198$) is also found to be positive and moderately correlated. The relationship between attitude towards school and extrinsic motivation is particularly significant as well as results in positive and high correlation. ($r=0.384$, $p < .001$)

Correlation between peer support with scales of motivation stands positive moderately significant as with intrinsic motivation ($r=0.188$), extrinsic motivation ($r=0.228$) and amotivation (0.198).

Table 3. Correlation Matrix

Correlation Matrix		Peer	ATS	Intrinsic	Extrinsic	Amotivation
Peer	Pearson's r	—				
	p-value	—				
ATS	Pearson's r	0.426 ^{***}	—			
	p-value	< .001	—			
Intrinsic	Pearson's r	0.188 [*]	0.315 ^{**}	—		
	p-value	0.042	0.002	—		
Extrinsic	Pearson's r	0.228 [*]	0.384 ^{***}	0.939 ^{***}	—	
	p-value	0.018	< .001	< .001	—	
Amotivation	Pearson's r	0.198 [*]	0.258 ^{**}	0.906 ^{***}	0.868 ^{***}	—
	p-value	0.034	0.008	< .001	< .001	—

Note. H_a is positive correlation
 Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$, one-tailed

*ATS- Attitude Towards School

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

According to the finding of the study and the results, we have been able to interpret the association of peer support with attitude towards school and academic motivation. Our study involved a higher number of students (66%) having peer support and the rest having low peer support (34%). A significant number of students had a neutral and positive attitude towards school. The mean values of motivation were the highest for Intrinsic Motivation (55.96), a bit less for Extrinsic Motivation (47.77) and the lowest for Amotivation (18.29).

The results from testing the previously mentioned hypotheses indicate that students who have supportive peers are more likely to hold a positive attitude towards school. The correlation was found to be positive and highly significant. This also shows that low support from peers would result in a negative attitude towards school. Students who received less support from class peers have shown low levels of academic motivation in comparison to those students who have high support from class peers and show higher levels of academic motivation. The mean was derived from both low and high peer support students and their subsequent extrinsic academic motivation. From this we interpret that peer support has some level of influence on academic motivation felt by the students. To observe the relationships between peer support and students' attitude towards school as well as their academic motivation, we applied Pearson's Correlation Matrix. The results between the three variables denoted that there is a significant relationship between the support peers receive and their connection with their attitude towards school ($r=0.426$), whether it is positive or negative. Further, the attitude towards school with extrinsic motivation was found to be very significant. ($r=0.384$). Here, we are considering peers to be a major influential part of extrinsic motivation and hence, it has been noticed that there exists a positive association between the three variables. There is research that supports the results that intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is highly positively related to academic motivation (Afzal et al., 2010; Peklaj & Levpušček, 2006). This would denote that attitude towards school is positively related to academic motivation, if we refer to the correlation matrix. Goldberg and Cornell (1998) and Mnyandu (2001) found a significant positive relationship between intrinsic motivation and achievement and learner performance. Research results have also been found in the literature that there is a positive relationship between academic achievement and intrinsic motivation (Corpus et al., 2009; Law et al., 2012; Lee et al., 2010).

From the aforementioned discussions, the following conclusions were derived:

A positive and significant relationship has been noticed between connection with peers and students' attitude towards school and their academic motivation. A majority of students who have a supportive class peer connection have a strong attitude towards school with better levels of academic motivation. This portrays the significance of peers in students' school life. Due to the pandemic, there are chances of peer connection dropping by some level pertaining to a number of reasons which may have a further impact on students' academic motivation. Therefore, a strong consideration must be given to class peer connection.

Recommendations

- Students should realize the influence they fall under because of their peers and give thought to how it may affect them academically. Also, they should try to cultivate a positive attitude towards their school amongst themselves as well as their peers.
- It would be advisable for supervisors, principals, teachers and parents to bear in mind that affective factors like peer connection and students' attitude towards school can be of significance when it comes to academic motivation and academic performance.

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Ezewu (1992) advised that the school must therefore use peer group energies to promote rather than impede good learning.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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